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ABSTRACT

The Connecticut Migratory Children's Program (CMCP), funded under the 1965 Elementary Secondary Education Act Title I, aims to provide migrant children with: (1) the opportunity to improve communications skills necessary for dealing with various situations; (2) preschool and kindergarten experiences geared to each child's psychological and physical development that will help him to function successfully; (3) specially designed programs in the academic disciplines that will increase each child's ability to function at a level equal to his potential; (4) specially designed activities which will increase each child's social growth, positive self-concept, and foster his ability to function in groups; and (5) programs that will improve each child's academic and vocational skills and give him exposure to prevocational orientation. It also aims to implement programs, using Federal, State, and local resources, to improve mutual understanding and appreciation of cultural differences among children. CMCP operates (1) multipurpose resource centers which are operated throughout the year, and (2) summer enrichment programs, including a special program developed for children who are employed during the summer to harvest tobacco. Purpose of both programs is to supplement, but not supplant, the migrant child's educational opportunities, and to coordinate the health, cultural, social, and educational services. (NQ)

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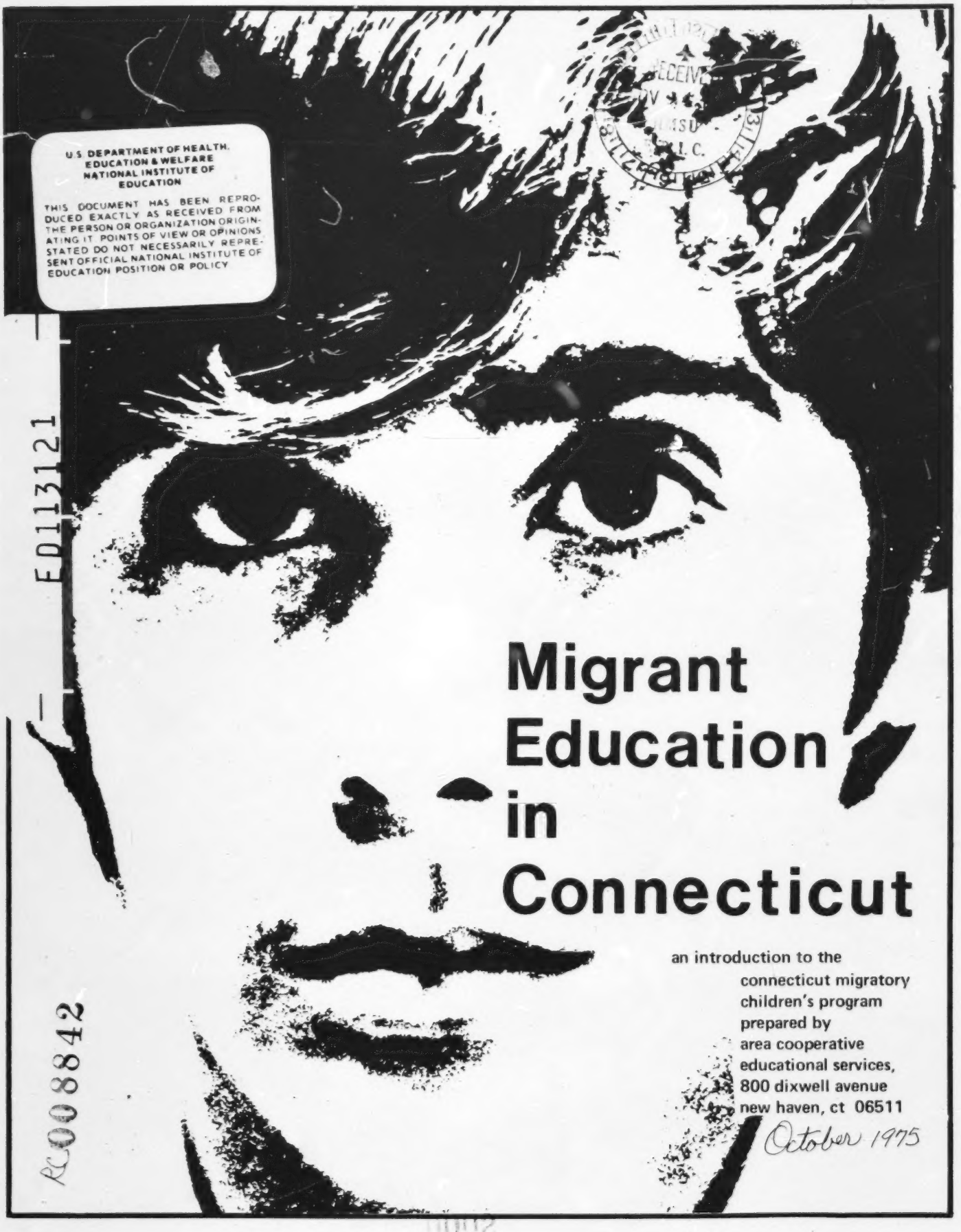

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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This booklet has been prepared to tell you about Connecticut's program of compensatory education for the children of migrant workers residing in the state.

For too many years, the migrant child was left to cope on his own, receiving minimal attention from the public school systems in which he was enrolled. With the passage of federal legislation in 1966 mandating aid to states with migratory children, that picture has been vastly changed.

Connecticut's Migratory Children's Program, I'm proud to say, has grown substantially over the years, and is delivering needed educational services to Connecticut's population of migrant children.

In the following pages you will learn who these children are and what Connecticut is doing to help them. We in Connecticut have pledged to offer the migrant child a chance to fulfill his potential, to give him an opportunity to gain in self-worth, to teach him to read and write and count and, ultimately, to equip him for a full and productive life. But these things are not easily attained. They take dedication, determination, and love. I believe the individuals who work in our migrant program have this, along with the superintendents and principals and teachers across Connecticut who have helped to make the migrant program a reality. Hopefully, through these efforts, migrant children will find a better life.

Mark R. Shedd

Mark R. Shedd
Commissoner of Education
State of Connecticut

In commenting toward the end of his life on his novel The Grapes of Wrath, certainly the most famous and very possibly the first account of the lives of migrant workers in the United States, John Steinbeck lamented that he "hadn't told the half of it."

While migrant workers may be gaining a higher profile among Americans in general and educators in particular, simple lack of information about migrant workers and their lives continues to be a major obstacle in providing migrant children with the means of breaking out of the unrewarding and backbreaking seasonal cycle of following the crops which characterizes the lives of their parents. Too often, teachers still don't know "the half of it" when it comes to migrant children.

It comes as a surprise to many, for example, that a migrant child never or seldom sees a doctor; that he almost invariably will have pinworms and other intestinal parasites (these diseases are so common that many migrant parents think they are normal) and that the incidence of dental abnormalities in migrant children are put, conservatively, at 95 percent (other authorities state that carious teeth are "universal").

A poor diet condemns the child from the start. Many have had no milk to drink for long periods of time. Their diet consists mainly of cheap foods like corn meal, rice, beans and peas. The migrant child is prone to scurvy and rickets and severe protein deficiencies and is prey to a host of diseases now rare in the nonmigrant world: smallpox, diptheria and whooping cough to name a few. It is estimated that two-thirds of the migrant children under eighteen have not received polio immunization.

Most migrant children come to school in clothing that is in deplorable condition – and many stay away from school because of self-consciousness about their clothing and the absence of showering or bathing facilities in their homes. The migrant child is often shy and may feel unaccepted. He is also subject to a marked increase in fears as he starts going to school. The level of achievement among migrant children is usually correlated with school attendance, and for most, school attendance has been very limited. By the time many are 12 to 13 years of age, they have missed enough days from school to place them two or three years behind the child of the same age.

On the brighter side, a number of migrant children have shown a high degree of intelligence, possibly as a result of having to cope creatively with their limited environment. Many migrant children have a very large speaking vocabulary in one or more languages as a result of having travelled a great deal and spoken with many people. Paradoxically, a limited number of migrant children have excellent physical health and a high degree of natural immunity to a variety of diseases. Migrant parents do not usually apply conventional middle-class pressures on their children to conform and to excel; consequently, many migrant are artistically creative and persistent once their interests have been engaged.

Because migrant children travel with their parents from place to place and state to state, they were virtually ignored for many years because they did not belong to any of the particular communities in which they maintained temporary residence. As a consequence, no one felt a direct sense of responsibility for them, being more concerned that whatever local resources were available be applied to the settled population. In 1966, however, an amendment was passed to the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA Title I, PL 89-10) mandating federal assistance to these needy children. The Connecticut Migratory Children's Program (CMCP) is funded under this act, as amended, (PL 89-750).

A migrant child is defined by the legislation as a "child who has moved from one school district to another during the past year with a parent or guardian who was seeking or acquiring employment in agriculture, including related food processing activities, such as canning and, more recently, fishing." A five year eligibility provision allows families meeting the above conditions but who are no longer following the crops and are 'settling in' a community to continue to receive assistance through the CMCP for a period of five years, provided that such assistance does not lessen the impact of the main thrust of the migrant program, which is to serve children who are still in the migrant stream.

The goals of the Connecticut Migratory Children's Program relate directly to the national goals for similar programs. The CMCP aims to provide instructional services to migrant children:

- To provide each migrant child with the opportunity to improve communications skills necessary for dealing with a variety of situations.
- To provide the migrant child with preschool and kindergarten experiences geared to his psychological and physical development that will help him to function successfully.
- To provide specially designed programs in the academic disciplines that will increase the migrant child's ability to function at a level equal to his potential.
- To provide specially designed activities which will increase the migrant child's social growth, foster a positive self-concept and his ability to function in groups.
- To provide programs that will improve the academic and vocational skills of migrant children and give them exposure to prevocational orientation.
- To implement programs, using every available federal, state and local resource, to improve mutual understanding and appreciation of cultural differences among children.

Supportive services provided by the Connecticut program include:

- The development in each program of a component of intrastate and interstate communications for the exchange of student records, methods, concepts, and

materials in order that the migrant program be a continuous and inherent part of the migrant child's total educational program.

- The development of communications involving the school, the community and its agencies, and the target group to insure coordination of all available resources for the benefit of migrant children.

- Providing a program of home-school coordination which establishes relationships between the project staff and the clientele served in order to improve the effectiveness of migrant programs and the process of parental reinforcement of student effort.

The Connecticut program is operated within the Connecticut State Department of Education. The program's central office is located in New Haven under the aegis of Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES), a non-profit public education agency, which serves as the fiscal agency and administrator of the federally approved contract.

The CMCP operates two types of learning programs:

- Multi-purpose resource centers which are operated throughout the year, and

- Summer enrichment programs, including a special program developed for children who are employed during the summer by the Connecticut Shade Tobacco Growers to harvest tobacco.

Both programs are meant to supplement – but not supplant – the migrant child's educational opportunities, and to coordinate the health, cultural, social and educational services. The premise underlying the Connecticut Migratory Children's Program is a simple one: it is that people are valuable and, therefore, ought to be valued. Specifically, it is held that migrant children ought not to have to spend their own lives as migrant workers, unless they choose to do so from a number of other, viable options. The program's goal is to give them these options. It is clear that the day of the migrant worker is passing, and even were it not, the life of the migrant worker is too steeped in privations and too lacking in rewards – a world of social and economic constraints reminiscent of medieval serfdom – to be considered a desirable lifestyle.

The migrant world provides long, drawn out tasks and inequitable rewards. In today's world, children deserve better.

In terms of philosophical application, the Connecticut Migratory Children's Program develops and implements educational activities for children of migrant parents which will:

- Increase ability to perform adequately in the public school classrooms.

- Increase ability to deal with matters of selfhood, self and others, and today's realities in general.

The achievement of these goals will provide the children of migrant parents with the ability to achieve and succeed in spite of known stumbling blocks which tend to become permanent fixtures in their lives, inhibiting capacity to learn.

Having broadly defined the intent of the program and the general thrust of its activities, the first practical problem encountered was the identification of eligible children – an innately difficult task compounded by loss and duplication of records as the migrant children move from school system to school system. The proc ess, under the direction of a Recruitment Specialist at the CMCP headquarters, involved contacting agencies that have information about migrant families. Specifically, contact was made with the Department of Labor, state employment offices, local educational agencies, ministerial and social action groups, neighborhood groups within the area which the migrant population is concentrated, public health officials, and social workers.

Registration of the children involved going to the homes (or camps) of migrant parents, explaining the Connecticut migrant program to them and its goals for their children, obtaining precise information about the status of the children in terms of the federal guidelines defining eligibility, and finally, completing a registration form with the child.

Connecticut has cooperated with other states across the union in forwarding the names and pertinent information concerning the children by computer linkup to the Migrant Student Record Transfer System in Arkansas to better keep track of the children after they have left Connecticut, and to help identify children coming to Connecticut from other states with migrant programs.

While the process of identification and recruitment was underway, teachers were selected for the program and took part in pre-service workshops. Studies examined by the program administrators tended to show that the delivery of education services to poor children required that staff selection be a very well-developed process, that teachers and aides should share, if possible, the ethnic group membership of the children they teach, and, that every effort should be made to secure staff who will become advocates for their children.

The major goal of the pre-service workshops was to insure that the teachers would interact constructively with migrant children and would assimilate an approach toward children which focuses on the culture and the educational needs of the child.

In providing for this awareness, workshop activities were formed around such subjects as the history, lifestyle, linguistic characteristics and values of various ethnic groups. Major attempts were made to provide an awareness of the culture of poverty which is endemic in migrant families.

During the academic year, tutorial programs or counseling programs or both are provided for the school systems of Guilford, Naugatuck, Meriden, Pomfret, Waterbury, New Haven and Ellington. Multi-purpose centers become operational in the summer in the towns of Bridgeport, Enfield, Guilford, Hartford, Meriden, New Haven, Naugatuck, Waterbury, Willimantic, and Pomfret, with on-site delivery of special programs in the tobacco camps which are operated by the members of the Connecticut Shade Tobacco Growers Association. The summer programs alone are anticipated to deliver services to 2,400 children.

In Pomfret, the emphasis of the services has been on individual tutoring in special subjects, comprehension skills, and intensive counseling. The main thrust of the Naugatuck program has been in reading and language arts, counseling, with ongoing efforts being directed toward the continued identification of the migrant children in the town. The CMCP services nine schools in Meriden, with reading, writing, and mathematics programs in two of them and counseling services in the remainder. The Waterbury program encompasses five schools; the curriculum includes language development, an introduction to bilingual and bicultural education, and reading comprehension.

The programs in the remaining towns are similar, the major thrust of each, however, is tailored to meet the specific needs of the children who are to benefit from the program.

Because of their highly mobile lives, migrant children are enrolled in a number of schools during their school age years. Limited school attendance usually accompanies each school enrollment. As the migrant child grows older, the gap between him and his non-migrant peers grows wider in terms of academic and social growth. As a group, it is thought that migrant children constitute the greatest single source of illiteracy in present day America.

The goal of the summer enrichment programs at the multipurpose centers is to help close the gap between migrant children and their non-migrant peers.

The children are picked up by buses at their homes each morning and driven to their assigned center. Before beginning the day, they are fed a nourishing breakfast, typically consisting of fruit juice, cereal, toast, bacon and eggs, or french toast with syrup and milk. Once all the children are fed, a short organization session prepares everyone for the day's activities.

The curricular offerings cover most of the traditional subjects, such as mathematics, language development, science, reading, social studies, and physical education. The principal difference between instruction in the multi-purpose centers and in the regular classroom is that instruction is not tied to seating plans, a quiet orderly room, or insistence on the assimilation of appropriate learning situation behaviors.

At noon, following a morning of classes in various academic areas, lunch is served.

Dieticians at each center assist with planning meals, ordering foods, and providing information about nutrition to the children. The noon meal includes meat, vegetables, salad, starchy food, bread, milk, and dessert. This meal is planned to meet the basic needs of one third to one half of the average daily food requirements of the child.

A variety of activities follows the noon meal. For some, academic activities continue, although not necessarily in the classroom. For others, there are field trips, art and dance lessons, and instruction in swimming.

Snacks, consisting of a fruit drink, cookies or fruit, and occasionally a dessert, are served between 2:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. as supplements to the children's daily food pattern. Following the afternoon snack, the children board their assigned buses for transportation home.

During the course of the summer the CMCP will also identify all existing health activities and individual children's needs and attempt to remedy any existing problems through a referral and follow-up process. Medical and paramedical personnel from the health agency where health services are under contract for the program will be used for this purpose.

On site programs at the summer tobacco camps are provided three nights a week, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. with particular emphasis on vocational education, in addition to the regular academic programs. Swimming is provided once a week, with field trips from time to time. The program has acquired a mobile unit with career education materials and books which will make periodic visits to the camps. Classes are also offered in sewing and typing, with equipment and materials provided by the CMCP.

Most individuals who exist on low income levels tend to be provided with marginal or restricted medical services, but for the child of migrant parents this problem of health services is compounded by living conditions that promote poor health. These range from poor toilet and bathing facilities to poorly insulated and ventilated living structures, to a lack of sanitation generally, in addition to imbalanced diets.

Under the direction of the Social Services Specialist, visits are made by the Community Worker to the homes of enrolled migrant children. When problems are identified that could be appropriately handled by a local or state agency a referral is made and the service was brought to the individual needing it. While primarily an educational program, the Connecticut Migratory Children's Program recognizes that health problems are a real barrier to learning. To help eliminate them the CMCP provides diagnostic types of health services generally; prescriptive services are provided where the condition is considered minor. Nutritional services are an inherent part of the program, and social services are provided both by the CMCP social services staff and through referrals to other public and private agencies in Connecticut.

The tutorial program is operational during the academic year and is designed to supple-

ment the migrant child's normal everyday school experience. These programs are carried out in the child's school, usually one to one or two to one with the CMCP teacher. Great stress is placed on helping the child adapt to his non-migrant peers by helping him to develop a better image of himself and master language and writing skills.

The groundwork has been laid by the State Director and his staff for continued identification of migrant children in local school systems and expansion of the programs to meet these children's needs. With the passing of each year, the problem of identification becomes a smaller one as more and more children are tagged in the Arkansas computer bank and the cooperation of local boards of education is secured.

It is hoped that as more and more Connecticut educators become aware of the migrant child and of the real progress he can make when his special needs have been understood the facilities the Connecticut Migratory Children's Program has to offer will be used to an even greater extent than they are at present.

Founded on the tenet that there is nothing so unequal as the equal treatment of unequals, the Connecticut Migratory Children's Program is seen by those who work within it as a vehicle for providing migrant children, through compensatory education and ancillary services, with an equal chance at a full and productive life.

Educators and others wishing to secure further information about the Connecticut Migratory Children's Program should contact;

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